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NIGERIAN LEOPARD SKIN SMUGGLER SENTENCED TO SIX MONTHS CUSTODY

OAKLAND – The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California announced that Moses Oladele Adeyemo, of Lagos, Nigeria, was sentenced yesterday to 6 months custody, 5 years probation and ordered to pay \$10,000 in restitution for smuggling four leopard skins into the United States from Nigeria.

Mr. Adeyemo pleaded guilty on July 29, 2008 to smuggling and wildlife violations under the Lacey Act. According to the plea agreement, Mr. Adeyemo admitted that on May 28, 2001, he imported into the United States a shipment containing four leopard skins sewn with three naguehyde bags, from Lagos, Nigeria, to Oakland, California. Customs officers examined this package at San Francisco International Airport (SFO) and found the four leopard skins concealed with the naguehyde bags. Mr. Adeyemo admitted that he did not have, nor had he applied for, a permit to export the leopard skins from Nigeria or a permit to import the leopard skins into the United States. Additionally, Mr. Adeyemo admitted that he did not declare the leopard skins on a U.S. Fish & Wildlife declaration form as required by law.

Mr. Adeyemo also admitted that on September 11, 2007, as he entered the United States at SFO, federal agents found that he had concealed within an undergarment on his person numerous large cat teeth, including leopard teeth. Mr. Adeyemo admitted that he had not declared these concealed teeth on the Customs and Border Protection declaration form he had completed for other, unconcealed wildlife items he was bringing into the United States.

The sentence was handed down by U.S. District Court Judge Sandra B. Armstrong following a guilty plea on two counts in violation of Smuggling, 18 U.S.C. § 545 and the Lacey Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(a)(1) and 3373(d)(2).

The prosecution is the result of a two year investigation by agents of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Maureen Bessette is the Assistant U.S. Attorney who is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Laurie Best.

Further Information:

Case #: CR03-40220 SBA

A copy of this press release may be found on the U.S. Attorney's Office's website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/can.

Electronic court filings and further procedural and docket information are available at <http://ecf.cand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

Judges' calendars with schedules for upcoming court hearings can be viewed on the court's website at www.cand.uscourts.gov.

All press inquiries to the U.S. Attorney's Office should be directed to Joshua Eaton at (415) 436-6958 or by email at Josh.Eaton@usdoj.gov.

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